



## AREA OF FOCUS

### RECRUITMENT OF NEW EMPLOYEES TO THE FIELD

With the high levels of burnout and large caseloads, recruitment of new employees through various pathways is imperative to meet the growing behavioral health needs in the United States.



## Recommendations

### Exposure to Career Pathways in K-12 and Post-Secondary Settings

Career pathways programs partner educators and employers to provide education and training to students from kindergarten through college in fields with worker shortages.<sup>1</sup>

### Creating Additional Entry Points through Grants, Fellowships, and Tuition Reimbursement

Expansion of programs such as HRSA's Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program and SAMHSA's Minority Fellowship Programs can create more opportunities for the field to address racial and ethnic diversity in the workforce.<sup>2</sup>

### Pay for Interns

Unpaid internships may cause undue financial hardship for students entering the behavioral health field, likely turning potential students towards other fields that offer paid on-the-job training.<sup>3</sup>

### Increase Pathways for Peer Support Specialists and Addictions Counselors

Peer support specialists and addictions counselors are both emerging fields within the behavioral health workforce that have lower barriers of entry.



## Examples

### Colorado, Funding Career Pathways in Behavioral Health

In 2015, the Colorado state legislature passed funding for the creation of various career pathways with high demand, including the behavioral health field.<sup>4</sup>

### Washington, Funding for Establishing Apprenticeship Programs

In 2021, the Washington state legislature appropriated \$1.5 million for the creation of paid apprenticeship programs to address the behavioral health shortage.<sup>5</sup>

### Connecticut, Certified Recovery Coach Training in Spanish

Following the trend of growth in the workforce in the area of peer workers, the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) offers the Recovery Coach Academy training in Spanish.<sup>6</sup>



## Action Steps

At an organizational level, state level, and as leaders in the behavioral health field, advocacy for funding the creation of career pathways is crucial in order to increase recruitment of new employees into the field. States and organizations can increase accessibility to entry level positions in the field by offering training in various languages to encourage bilingual candidates to enter the behavioral health field.



**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

- <sup>1</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures. (2022, May 20). State strategies to recruit and retain the Behavioral Health Workforce. <https://www.ncsl.org/health/state-strategies-to-recruit-and-retain-the-behavioral-health-workforce>
- <sup>2</sup> United States Government Accountability Office. (2022, October). Behavioral Health: Available Workforce Information and Federal Actions to Help Recruit and Retain Providers. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-23-105250.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. (2022). 2022 Behavioral Health Workforce Assessment: A report of the Behavioral Health Workforce Advisory Committee. [https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/BHWAC-2022-report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/BHWAC-2022-report_FINAL.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note. (2015, May 18). HB15-1274 FINAL FISCAL NOTE. [https://statebillinfo.com/bills/fiscal/15/HB1274\\_f1.pdf](https://statebillinfo.com/bills/fiscal/15/HB1274_f1.pdf)
- <sup>5</sup> Washington State Legislature. (n.d.). HB 1094 - 2023-24. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1094&Year=2023&Initiative=false>
- <sup>6</sup> Connecticut Center for Recovery (CCAR) Training Programs. (n.d.) Recovery Resources CT. <https://addictionrecoverytraining.org/training-products/>